

MyCJLab

School Name University of South Florida, St. Petersburg, FL
Course Name Survey of Criminal Justice Systems
Course Format Online

Key Results Students who completed all or most of the MyCJLab homework assignments earned 14-percentage-point higher average exam grades and 16-percentage-point higher overall course grades than students who skipped more than five assignments during the semester.

Submitted by
Bill Ruefle, Professor

Course materials
Criminal Justice Today, Schmallegger

About the Course

The University of South Florida, in downtown St. Petersburg, is a separately accredited institution in the University of South Florida System. It retains its own identity and mission while contributing to and benefiting from the associations and shared resources of the USF System. Survey of Criminal Justice Systems is a three-credit course taken primarily by criminology majors; it also appeals to other majors seeking social science requirements. The course introduces students to the structure and operation of law enforcement, prosecution, the courts, and corrections, as well as the ethical dimensions of the system and the values that underlie it.

Challenges and Goals

About six years ago, then associate professor Bill Ruefle initially intended to offer his Criminology Survey course online. But rather than post lecture videos from face-to-face classes, Ruefle sought an interactive program with real-life simulations of key criminal justice concepts that would both be interesting to students and provide content to support the course textbook. Ruefle chose Pearson's Criminal Justice Interactive program, the precursor to MyCJLab. Today, he enjoys the kind of content-to-quiz pairing he first sought plus the program's wide range of learning aids and interactive features.

Implementation

Although all homework and assessments are done by way of MyCJLab, students are required to read the textbook chapters as the chapters get assigned in the syllabus before attempting any online work.

MyCJLab helps students learn and remediate chapter content. For each chapter in MyCJLab, students complete required pretests, posttests, and simulations. Students are permitted unlimited attempts to complete the tasks by a set deadline. MyCJLab assignments are due by 12 p.m. on the day the corresponding exam is opened; only the best score for each is recorded; and no credit is given for late work.

Four multiple-choice exams are given, covering approximately three chapters each. Exams are open for 24 hours and timed (usually 90 minutes but may vary depending on content covered in the exams).

Assessments
80 percent Exams (four)
20 percent MyCJLab assignments

Results and Data

Data indicate a positive and linear relationship between the MyCJLab homework scores and average exam scores of students who completed all exams. It is confirmed by the correlation value $r = .67^*$, which is significant at $p < .0001$ (figure 1). Further, there is a significant correlation between MyCJLab homework scores and final course grades, indicating that students who earn higher MyCJLab scores have achieved greater mastery of course material, as seen in final course grades. This is confirmed by the correlation value $r = .77$, which is significant at $p < .0001$.

This relationship of the MyCJLab homework scores to final course grades is reinforced by an analysis of the final grade distribution (figure 2).

- Students who earned a final course grade of A or B scored an average of 93 percent on their MyCJLab homework.

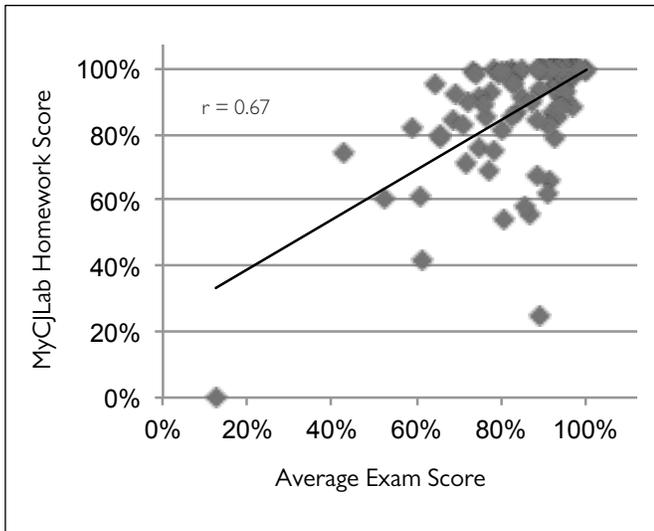


Figure 1. Correlation between MyCJLab Homework Scores and Average Exam Scores, Spring 2014 (n = 93)

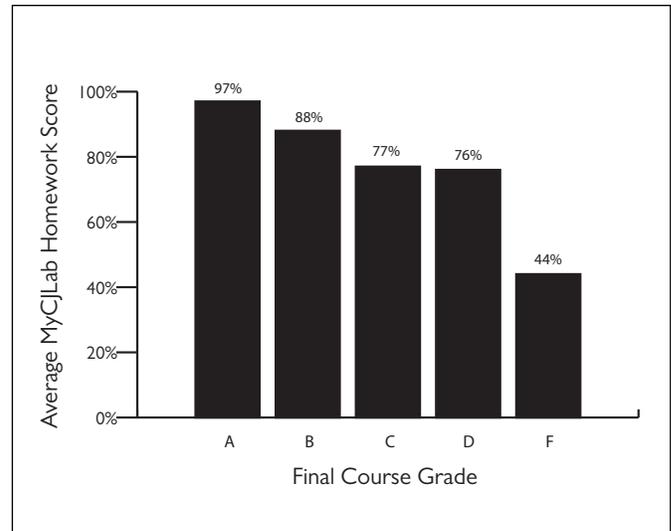


Figure 2. Relationship between MyCJLab Average Homework Scores and Final Course Grades, Spring 2014 (n = 93)

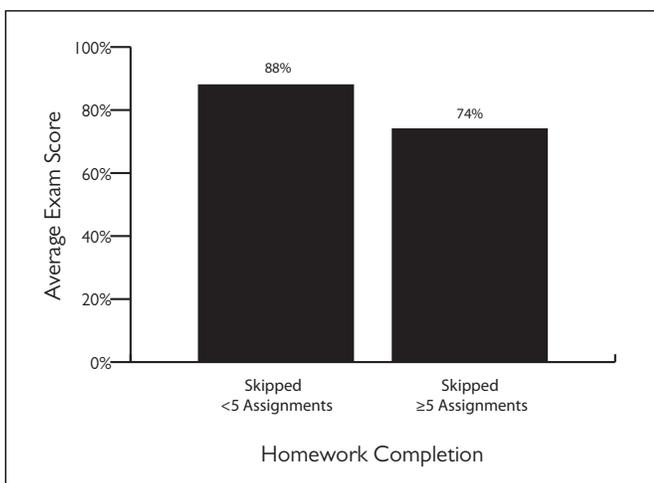


Figure 3. Relationship between Average Exam Scores and MyCJLab Homework Completion, Spring 2014 (n = 93)

- Students who earned a final course grade of C or D scored an average of 77 percent on their MyCJLab homework.

In addition, students were placed into two groups based on MyCJLab homework completion: those who completed all or most assignments (skipped fewer than five assignments) and those who skipped five or more assignments. Average exam scores were 14 percentage points higher for students who completed all or most assignments: 88 percent compared with 74 percent for students who skipped five or more assignments (figure 3).

- Fifty-one percent of students completed all assignments.

- Final course grades averaged 87 percent for students who skipped fewer than five assignments.
- Final course grades averaged 71 percent for students who skipped more than assignments.

The Student Experience

Student comments have been largely positive about the impact MyCJLab has on student success, and students recommend that Ruefle continue to use it. The organized material in MyCJLab offers his online students the structure they need to succeed in the course. For example, Pre-Tests lead them to the learning objectives and study material they need to remediate prior to taking Post-Tests. In addition, students report that they find MyCJLab simulations helpful as they apply textbook content to real-life applications of course material.

Conclusion

According to Ruefle, MyCJLab helps him create an online course that both challenges students with assessments and remediation and uses simulations of real-life situations to add context to textbook material. Ruefle adds that it is critical to provide detailed instructions on using MyCJLab during his introduction to the course; many online students are nontraditional and they have time-management concerns. Providing a step-by-step guide to registering for and using MyCJLab helps students get up and running quickly. Ruefle also recommends applying MyLab best practices at the onset of the course to set the stage for a successful implementation and, ultimately, increased student success.